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Source: *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Aug., 1977), pp. 233-254

Published by: Comparative Legislative Research Center

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/439340>

Accessed: 27/09/2009 15:42

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The Puzzle of Representation: Specifying Components of Responsiveness

This study examines the conceptualization of representation, particularly the problems resulting from conceiving of it simply in terms of congruence between the attitudes of constituents and of representatives on policy questions. It examines critically some of the work that followed the innovative study of Miller and Stokes. Regarding representation as responsiveness, it identifies four components of this concept: policy, service, allocation, and symbolic responsiveness.

The puzzle: "We have representative institutions, but like the Greeks we do not know what they are about" (Eulau, 1967).

With the publication in 1963 of "Constituency Influence in Congress" by Miller and Stokes, the direction was set for a novel approach to the study of political representation.¹ The virtue of this original study notwithstanding, the approach had some quite unexpected consequences for subsequent theoretical development and empirical research. Much of this development and research was due less to the impact of Miller and Stokes' innovative approach as such than to its vulgarization. The questions addressed in this paper are two: first, we propose to unravel the continuing puzzle of representation which was probably made even more puzzling by the thoughtless use of the concept of "congruence" which Miller and Stokes had introduced into discourse about representation; and second, we propose to explicate the concept of "responsiveness" by decomposing it into four components which seem to correspond to four targets of representation.

The Miller-Stokes Model

Miller and Stokes (1963) themselves were well aware of the broader context of theory and research on representation,² but the focus of their particular analysis was a more limited one than "representation." They were interested in the degree to which "constituency control," rather than "party voting," determined congressional roll call behavior: "The fact that

our House of Representatives . . . has irregular party voting does not of itself indicate that Congressmen deviate from party in response to local pressures" (p. 45). The analysis addressed an old question: which factor, party or constituency, contributes more to variance in roll-call voting (all other things being equal)? The question had been previously asked in numerous studies relying, of necessity, on aggregate surrogate indicators of presumed district predispositions, most of them demographic or ecological.³

Miller and Stokes' research was a giant stride in the study of representation because it freed analysis from dependence on surrogate variables as indicators of constituency attitudes or predispositions. Miller and Stokes interviewed a sample of congressional constituents (voters and non-voters) and their respective congressmen (as well as non-incumbent candidates) whose attitudes in three broad issue domains they compared with each other, with congressmen's perceptions of constituency attitudes, and with corresponding roll call votes. Their tool of analysis was the product moment correlation coefficient and their mode of treatment was "causal analysis," which was then being introduced into political science. Miller and Stokes found the relationships among the variables of their model to vary a good deal from issue area to issue area, being strongest in the case of civil rights, weaker in the case of social welfare, and weakest in the case of foreign involvement. They concluded:

The findings of this analysis heavily underscore the fact that no single tradition of representation fully accords with the realities of American legislative politics. The American system *is* a mixture, to which the Burkean, instructed-delegate, and responsible-party models all can be said to have contributed elements. Moreover, variations in the representative relation are most likely to occur as we move from one policy domain to another (p. 56).

We have no quarrel with this general conclusion concerning the American system. We are bothered by the definition of what Miller and Stokes call "the representative relation" and its operational expression. This "relation" is the similarity or, as it is also called, the "congruence" between the four variables of the causal model that serves the purposes of analysis.⁴ This specification of congruence as the expression of the representative relation has had great influence on later researchers, both those working in the tradition of, or with the data made available by, the Michigan group and those working independently with fresh data of their own.⁵ The concern here is not this influence as such but rather the gradual erosion of alternative theoretical assumptions about representation of which Miller and Stokes themselves are fully cognizant. As a result of this erosion, what for Miller and Stokes (1963, p. 49) was only "a starting point for a wide range of analyses" became an exclusive definition of representation: high

congruence was interpreted as evidence of the presence of representation, and low congruence was taken as proof of its absence.

Whatever congruence may be symbolizing, it is not a self-evident measure of representation. Later researchers, poorly tutored in theories and practices of representation, tended to ignore this. Miller and Stokes, in order to use congruence as a measure, had stipulated three conditions for constituency influence or control. First, control in the representational relationship can be exercised through recruitment—constituents choose that representative who shares their views so that, by following his “own convictions,” the representative “does his constituents’ will.” Second, control can be obtained through depriving the representative of his office—the representative follows “his (at least tolerably accurate) perceptions of district attitude in order to win re-election.” And third, “the constituency must in some measure take the policy views of candidates into account in choosing a Representative” (pp. 50-51).

The electoral connection is of course only one of the links between representative and represented. And it should by no means be taken for granted that it is the most critical, the most important, or the most effective means to insure constituency influence on or control over public policies and the conduct of representatives. It is so only if one or all of the conditions for constituency control specified by Miller and Stokes are satisfied. This is also precisely the reason why attitudinal or perceptual congruence is not an exclusive measure of representation; it is simply the “starting point,” as Miller and Stokes knew, in the puzzle of representation. Anyone who has the least sensitivity to the representative process recognizes that representatives are influenced in their conduct by many forces or pressures or linkages other than those arising out of the electoral connection and should realize that restricting the study of representation to the electoral connection produces a very limited vision of the representational process. Miller and Stokes themselves were eminently aware of this, as their “Conclusion” indicated. Yet, only three years after publication of their analysis, when two other analysts (Cnudde and McCrone, 1966), subjecting the Miller-Stokes data to an alternative causal analysis, found no support for recruitment as a condition of representation, constituency control was reduced to a purely psychological function in the representative’s mind, and the danger of limiting the “representative relation” to attitudinal and perceptual congruence was demonstrated. Moreover, these analysts altogether ignored Miller and Stokes’ important third condition for constituency influence through the electoral connection: constituents’ taking account of the candidate’s policy views in choosing the representative.

Indeed, Miller and Stokes themselves had the most trouble with

this last condition. The overwhelming evidence of their research and that of others denies the condition: most citizens are not competent to perform the function which the model assumes—that elections are in fact effective sanctioning mechanisms in the representational relationship. Miller and Stokes gave a number of “reasons” for why representatives seem to be so sensitive about their voting records—for if voters do not know the record, this sensitivity is surely puzzling. They suggested that the voting record may be known to the few voters who, in close contests, make the difference between victory or defeat, and that the Congressman is “a dealer in increments and margins.” They also speculated that the voting record may be known to opinion leaders in the district who serve as gatekeepers and conveyors of evaluation in a two-step flow of communication. But there is no evidence for this in their own research.⁶

The Crisis in Representational Theory

It would not yield further theoretical dividends to review in any detail the empirical studies of representation that, in one way or another, are predicated on the attitudinal-perceptual formulation of congruence that had served Miller and Stokes as a starting point but that, for most of their successors, became a terminal point. Most of these studies are distinguished by lack of historical-theoretical knowledge of representation and of independent theoretical creativity. In particular, they are cavalier in regard to a number of dilemmas that, by the middle sixties, had forced themselves on the attention of scholars interested in theoretical understanding of the problem of representation. That these dilemmas were articulated by different scholars at about the same time was probably coincidental, but the coincidence is important because it emphasized the possibility of alternative research directions.

First, representational theory made assumptions about citizen behavior that were negated by the empirical evidence. Wahlke, examining the role of the represented in the representational relationship, concluded that the evidence did not justify treating citizens as significant sources of policy demands, positions or even broad orientations that could be somehow “represented” in the policy-making process. Citizens simply lack the necessary information for effective policy choices to be communicated to their representatives, even if they were to make the effort to communicate. This being the case, Wahlke concluded that the “simple demand-input model” of representation was deficient. This is of course precisely the model that Miller-Stokes had in fact constructed in order to organize and explain their data. Wahlke suggested that a “support-input model” might be more appropriate.⁷

Second, given the limited capacity of the represented to formulate policy, a viable theory could no longer ignore the asymmetry of the representational relationship. Eulau suggested, therefore, that research should proceed from the structural assumption of a built-in status difference between representative and represented in which the former rather than the latter give direction to the relationship. Representational theory would have to deal with the tensions arising out of status differentiation rather than deny their existence (Eulau, 1967). Once status is introduced as a variable into the representational equation, the model of the representational relationship can be recursive, and the causal ordering of the relevant variables is likely to be reversed.

Finally, in a linguistic study of the concept of representation, Pitkin (1967) found the traditional theories of representation flawed. She advanced the proposition that representation, referring to a social relationship rather than to an attribute of the individual person, could be meaningfully conceptualized only as a systemic property. Representation might or might not emerge at the level of the collectivity, the criterion of emergence being the collectivity's potential for "responsiveness." Political representation "is primarily a public, institutionalized arrangement involving many people and groups, and operating in the complex ways of large-scale social arrangements. What makes it representation is not any single action by any one participant, but the over-all structure and functioning of the system, the patterns emerging from the multiple activities of many people" (pp. 221-222). Moreover, after considering every conceivable definition, Pitkin concluded that political representation means "acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them" (p. 209). However, there is also the stipulation that the representative "must not be found persistently at odds with the wishes of the represented without good reason in terms of their interest, without a good explanation of why their views are not in accord with their interests" (pp. 209-210).

Pitkin's formulation creates many measurement problems for empirical research. Concepts like "wishes," "good reason," "interest," or "views," are difficult to operationalize. She provides no clues as to how "responsiveness" as a systemic property of the political collectivity can be ascertained and how, indeed, it can be measured in ways enabling the scientific observer to conclude that representation has in fact emerged at the level of the political system. Pitkin's treatment seems to stress the condition in which the representative stands ready to be responsive when the constituents do have something to say. A legislature may, therefore, be responsive whether or not there are specific instances of response. In other words, Pitkin emphasized a potential for response rather than an act of response. There are

considerable difficulties in empirically working with a concept stressing the possibility of an act rather than the act itself. Moreover, the formulation ignores Wahlke's injunction to jettison the demand-input model. Nevertheless, Pitkin's work had an almost immediate and profound effect on subsequent empirical research. (See Prewitt and Eulau, 1969; Muller, 1970; Peterson, 1970.)

Research on representation following the watershed year of 1967 has taken two major innovative routes. First, taking their cue from Wahlke's critique of the demand-input model, Patterson, Hedlund, and Boynton (1975) have used a support-input model that makes fewer requirements on the capacity of the represented to play a role in the representational process. However, their model continues to be based on congruence assumptions. Their analysis, conducted at the level of the individual, largely consists of comparison of the represented and representational elites in terms of relevant attitudes, perceptions and behavior patterns.

Second, taking a cue from Pitkin, Eulau and Prewitt (1973) transformed data collected at the level of individuals into grouped data, and conducted their analysis of representation at the macro level of small decision-making groups (city councils). In contrast to Patterson and his associates, Eulau and Prewitt stressed actual rather than potential response to constituent inputs, whether of the demand or support variety. In retrospect, it appears, they were harnessing "reactive" behavior rather than responsive behavior in Pitkin's sense, for they ignored the direction of the response—whether it was in fact "in the interest of" the constituents at the focus of representation. But these retrospective musings only suggest that the problem of conceptualizing representation in terms of responsiveness remains on the agenda of theory and research. As Loewenberg (1972, p. 12) has summed up the situation more recently:

Representation . . . is an ill-defined concept that has acquired conflicting meanings through long use. It may be employed to denote any relationship between rulers and ruled or it may connote responsiveness, authorization, legitimation, or accountability. It may be used so broadly that any political institution performs representative functions or so narrowly that only an elected legislature can do so. To a surprising extent, the Burkean conceptualization of the representative function is still in use, and Eulau's call for a concept adequate to modern concerns about the relationship between legislators and their constituencies has not been answered.

Responsiveness as Congruence

Although the expectations or behavioral patterns to which the term "responsiveness" refers were implicit in the concept of "representative government,"⁸ the term as such had not been used by Miller and Stokes or

others as the defining characteristics of representation. By 1967, when Pitkin's work was published, the term struck an attractive chord as the ideals of "participatory democracy" were once more being revived in neopopulist movements that had intellectual spokesmen in the social sciences. Even though one should not expect a close affinity between the vocabulary of participation and the vocabulary of representation on logical-theoretical grounds, a term like responsiveness stemming from considerations of representative democracy could easily blend in with considerations of participatory democracy. When analysts of political participation like Verba and Nie (1972) came to pay attention to empirical work on representation, they had little trouble in linking, by way of an adaptation of the assumption of congruence, the concept of responsiveness to their work on participation. Interestingly, although they did not cite or refer to Pitkin's linguistic analysis, Verba and Nie found, on the one hand, that "responsiveness, as far as we can tell, rarely has been defined precisely, almost never has been measured, and never has been related to participation" (p. 300). On the other hand, they acknowledged Miller and Stokes, who had not used the term: "Miller and Stokes in their analysis of the relationship between constituency attitudes and Congressmen, do deal with responsiveness in ways similar to ours" (p. 300, ft. 3).

Indeed, in examining and seeking to explain the effects of different degrees of citizen participation on the responsiveness of community leaders, Verba and Nie present a rechristened version of the congruence assumption of representation which they call "concurrency":

Our measure of congruence depends on how well the priorities of the citizens and the leaders match. Several types of concurrency are possible . . . our measure of the concurrency between citizens and community leaders measures the extent to which citizens and leaders in the community choose the same "agenda" of community priorities (p. 302).

But they immediately raise the critical problem of causality: "whether we have the warrant to consider our measure of *concurrency* to be a measure of responsiveness. Just because leaders agree with citizens and that agreement increases as citizens become more active, can we be sure that it is citizen activity that is causing leaders to *respond* by adopting the priorities of the citizen?" (p. 304).

In order to test for the causal relationship, Verba and Nie compared the correlation coefficients obtained for the relationship between "citizen activeness" and concurrency, on the one hand, and between "leader activeness" and concurrency, on the other hand. Finding that the correlations for citizens are "much stronger" than those for leaders, Verba and Nie concluded that their measure of concurrency "seems to be a valid measure of responsive-

ness to leaders” (pp. 331-332). But this mechanical comparison is not a test of causality at all in regard to the direction of responsiveness. In fact, it amounts to a false interpretation of the data. The correlations for citizens simply mean that more active citizens see things (priorities to be done in the community) more like leaders do than is the case with less active citizens; the correlations for leaders simply mean that the more active leaders see things more like citizens do than is the case with less active leaders. The strength of the coefficients, all of which are positive for both citizens and leaders, does not prove anything about the direction of causality—whether citizens influence leaders or leaders influence citizens, or whether citizens are responsive to leaders or leaders to citizens. It cannot be otherwise because Verba and Nie’s measure of concurrence, like Miller and Stokes’ measure of congruence, is neutral as to direction and requires that the direction of the relationships involved in the model be theoretically stipulated. There is no such stipulation in the Verba-Nie application of the concurrence measure to the question of linkage between leaders and led.

Causal analysis, then, does not free the analyst from defining his terms—be they power and influence, or be they responsiveness—in advance and stipulating the direction of expected relationships in advance.⁹ The mechanical application of statistical tests of a possible causal structure does not necessarily model real-world relationships if the operational definitions of the model’s components make no theoretical sense. Verba and Nie’s two-edged use of the responsiveness, operationalized in terms of the directionless concept of concurrence, is intrinsically characterized by ambiguity. If concurrence is a measure of responsiveness of leaders to citizens, it cannot be a measure of responsiveness of citizens to leaders. If one were to take their comparison of the correlations between participation and concurrence for citizens and leaders as an indication of anything, it would have to be that leaders are responsive to citizens and citizens are responsive to leaders, varying in degree with degree of participation.

Pitkin, it was noted, had raised the importance of responsiveness as the critical characteristic of representation, but she had left the term undefined. Representatives, in order to represent, were to be responsive to their constituents, but Pitkin did not specify the content or target of responsiveness. Verba and Nie had taken a step forward by specifying public policy issues as the target of responsiveness. In focusing exclusively on congruence or concurrence in regard to policy attitudes or preferences, they ignored other possible targets in the relationship between representatives and represented which may also give content to the notion of responsiveness. By emphasizing only one component of responsiveness as a substantive concept, they reduced a complex phenomenon like representation to one

of its components and substituted the component for the whole. But if responsiveness is limited to one component, it cannot capture the complexities of the real world of politics. It is necessary, therefore, to view responsiveness as a complex, compositional phenomenon that entails a variety of possible targets in the relationship between representatives and represented. How else could one explain that representatives manage to stay in office in spite of the fact that they are *not* necessarily or always responsive to the represented as the conception of representation as congruence or concurrence of policy preferences requires?

It deserves mention that Miller and Stokes (1963) had themselves realized that there are possible targets of responsiveness other than policy issues. They emphasized the “necessity of specifying the acts *with respect to which* one actor has power or influence or control over another.” Their target, they conceded, was only the set of issues lying within the three policy areas of civil rights, social welfare and foreign involvement. But significantly they added, “We are not able to say how much control the local constituency may or may not have over *all* actions of its Representative, and there may well be pork-barrel issues or other public matters of peculiar relevance to the district on which the relation of Congressman to constituency is quite distinctive” (p. 48). Miller and Stokes did not specify what they referred to as “other public matters.” It is the task of the rest of this paper to suggest what some of these other targets of responsiveness might be.

Components of Responsiveness

There are four possible components of responsiveness which, as a whole, constitute representation. While each component can be treated as an independent target of responsiveness, all four must be considered together in the configurative type of analysis which, it seems to us, the complexity of the representational nexus requires. The first component is, of course, *policy responsiveness* where the target is the great public issues that agitate the political process. Second, there is *service responsiveness* which involves the efforts of the representative to secure particularized benefits for individuals or groups in his constituency. Third, there is *allocation responsiveness* which refers to the representative's efforts to obtain benefits for his constituency through pork-barrel exchanges in the appropriations process or through administrative interventions. Finally, there is what we shall call *symbolic responsiveness* which involves public gestures of a sort that create a sense of trust and support in the relationship between representative and represented. It is possible that there are other targets of responsive conduct which, in composition with the four here tapped,

constitute the matrix of representational relationships. But the main point we are trying to make is this: responsiveness refers not just to “this” or “that” target of political activity on the part of the representative but to a number of targets. Only when responsiveness is viewed as a compositional phenomenon can the approach to representation-as-responsiveness recommended by Pitkin be useful. It is the configuration of the component aspects of responsiveness that might yield a viable theory of representative government under modern conditions of societal complexity.

Policy Responsiveness

How the representative and the represented interact with respect to the making of public policy lies at the heart of most discussions of responsiveness. Responsiveness in this sense refers to the structure in which district positions on policy issues, specified as some measure of central tendency or dispersion, are related to the policy orientation of the representative—attitudinal or perceptual—and to his subsequent decision-making conduct in a given field of policy.

The premise underlying the specification of policy responsiveness is the presence of a meaningful connection between constituent policy preferences or demands and the representative’s official behavior. This is what Miller and Stokes called “congruence” and what Verba and Nie called “concurrence.” Whatever the term, the operational definition is the same: if the representative and his constituency agree on a particular policy, no matter how the agreement has come about, then the representative is responsive. There are, as has been noted, several problems with the model of representation built on the operationalization of responsiveness as congruence, notably the problem that congruence is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for responsiveness. The representative may react to constituency opinion, and hence evince congruent attitudes or behavior, yet not act in what is in the best interest of the constituency as he might wish to define that interest, thereby being in fact unresponsive. Further, the representative may make policy in response to groups and interests other than his constituents, including executive and bureaucratic agencies. Whether such conduct is also in the interest of his district as he sees it is an empirical question. But whatever the formulation and findings, it cannot be denied that policy responsiveness is an important component of representation.

The notion of policy responsiveness is implicit in some of the classic theories of representation. First of all, the controversy over mandate versus independence, whether the representative is a delegate or a trustee, though considered obsolete by Eulau (1967, pp. 78-79) and in

many respects resolved by Pitkin (1967, ch. 7, pp. 144-167), is still intriguing and relevant to the present discussion. For the debate is over whether the representative should act according to what *he* thinks is in the "best interest" of the constituency, regardless of constituency "wants," or whether he should follow the "expressed wishes" of the district, regardless of how he personally feels. The debate really turns on the competence of the citizenry in matters of public policy. For while the citizenry may know what it wants, it may not know what it needs. Secondly, therefore, an appropriate definition of policy responsiveness will be related to the classic issue of "district interest" as against "district will." There is no denying that the notion of policy responsiveness pervades empirical research on legislative decision-making, even when the issue of representation as a theoretical one is not raised. (For recent research, see Turner and Schneier, 1970; Kingdon, 1973; Clausen, 1973; Jackson, 1974; Matthews and Stimson, 1975.) However, precisely because this is the case, it is important not to ignore other components of responsiveness in the representational relationship. Exclusive emphasis on the policy aspects of responsiveness may give a one-sided view and may not help in solving the puzzle of representation.

Service Responsiveness

A second target for responsiveness to define the representational relationship concerns the non-legislative services that a representative actually performs for individuals or groups in his district. Service responsiveness, then, refers to the advantages and benefits which the representative is able to obtain for particular constituents. There are a number of services that constituents may expect and that the representative considers an intrinsic part of his role. Some of them involve only modest, if time consuming, requests, such as responding to written inquiries involving constituents' personal concerns, or facilitating meetings and tours for visitors from the home district. Newsletters or columns in local newspapers may be used to inform constituents of legislation that may be of interest and use to them. Much of this work is routine and carried out in regular fashion.

Another link in the chain of service responsiveness is often referred to as case work. (See Clapp, 1963.) Given his official position and presumed influence, the representative is in a position to solve particular problems for members of his constituency. The representative intervenes between constituents and bureaucrats in such matters as difficulties with a tax agency, delays in welfare payments, securing a job in government, and so on. Providing constituent services and doing case work constitute for many representatives more significant aspects of their representational role than does

legislative work like bill-drafting or attending committee hearings. These "errand boy" functions deserve more theoretical attention than they have been given in contemporary research. In some important situations the representative may actually serve as an advocate and even lobbyist for special interests in his district vis-à-vis the legislature, departmental bureaucracies or regulatory agencies. This type of responsiveness is indeed crucial in trying to understand modern representative government.

This notion of service responsiveness seemed to underlie Eulau and Prewitt's (1973, pp. 424-427, 649-650) operational definition of responsiveness. In their study of San Francisco Bay Area city councils, they initially divided these small representative bodies into those which seemed to be somehow responsive to constituent needs or wants and those which did not seem to be responsive. They then distinguished among the former councils those which were responsive to important standing interests in the community or attentive publics, and those which more often were responsive only to temporary alliances having a particular grievance or request. This conception of responsiveness, then, is based on the kind of group or individuals whom the representative perceives as being primarily served by his activities. Zeigler and Jennings (1974, pp. 77-94), in a study of school boards, present a similar conception of responsiveness, conceptually distinguishing more sharply between "group responsiveness" and "individualized responsiveness." Both of these research teams, then, defined responsiveness in terms of the significant recipients of representational services.

That service responsiveness is an important element in representation should be apparent. Moreover, there is every reason to believe that it is increasing rather than declining. Until the middle sixties, it was generally assumed that case work and the advocacy of special interests bring advantages and benefits only to those who take the initiative in soliciting the representative's help. But as Fiorina (1977, p. 180) has recently pointed out, at least with reference to the federal level, increased bureaucratic activity in the wake of increased federal largesse to all kinds of population groups has also motivated congressmen to "undoubtedly stimulate the demand for their bureaucratic fixit services." The representative does not just respond to demands for his good offices and services; he has become a kind of hustler who advertises and offers them on his own initiative.¹⁰

This explication of service responsiveness has been entirely focused on the relationship between the representative and particular constituents. The representative can also be responsive in his unique role as a middleman in the allocation of more generalized benefits. We refer here to what has been traditionally called "pork-barrel politics" and to what we shall refer, for lack of a better term, as "allocation responsiveness." Both service respon-

siveness, whether initiated by the representative or not, and allocation responsiveness, which is always initiated by him, are important elements of representational behavior and important pillars in the representational relationship.

Allocation Responsiveness

It has long been recognized that pork-barrel politics in legislative allocations of public projects involves advantages and benefits presumably accruing to a representative's district as a whole. Although traditionally these allocations were seen as "public goods," with the expansion of the government's role in all sectors of society—industry, agriculture, commerce, health, education, welfare, internal security, and so on—the distinction between public and private benefits is difficult to maintain. Again, as Fiorina (1977, p. 180) has felicitously put it in connection with federal politics, "The pork-barreler need not limit himself to dams and post offices. There is LEAA money for the local police; urban renewal and housing money for local officials; and educational program grants for the local education bureaucracy. The congressman can stimulate applications for federal assistance, put in a good word during consideration, and announce favorable decisions amid great fanfare." Such allocations may benefit the district as a whole, or they may benefit some constituents more than others because they make more use of the benefits. The critical point to be made is that in being responsive as an "allocator," whether in the legislative or bureaucratic processes, the representative seeks to anticipate the needs of his clients and, in fact, can stimulate their wants.

Legislators' committee memberships sometimes serve as indicators of allocation responsiveness, as revealed in Fenno's (1973) studies of legislative conduct in committees of the U. S. House of Representatives. A representative from a district that has a particular stake in a committee's jurisdiction will often seek a post on a parent committee but also on a particularly suitable sub-committee; such membership presumably enables him to act in a manner responsive to the best interests of his district and some or all of his constituents.

However, one cannot automatically assume that a legislator serving on a committee "not relevant" to his district is necessarily unresponsive and not interested in securing allocations. Legislators often seek preferment on important committees like Rules, Appropriations, or Ways and Means not because these committees are directly "relevant" to the interests of their constituents, but because they place members in positions of power and influence vis-à-vis administrative agencies which distribute benefits, such

as the Army Corps of Engineers, the Park Service, or the Veterans Administration. These secondary bonds are probably as critical in securing benefits for the district as are the primary bonds resulting from "relevant" committee assignments. However, the secondary bonds have less symbolic value than do the primary bonds. And symbolic pay-offs, we shall see, are an important fourth component of representational responsiveness.

Symbolic Responsiveness

The fourth component of responsiveness is more psychologically based than the others. The first three components all somehow tap a behavioral aspect of representation: policy responsiveness is oriented toward the decision-making behavior of the representative in matters of public controversy; while service and allocation responsiveness are oriented toward particularized or collective benefits obtained through the acts of the representative. The representational relationship is not, however, just one of such concrete transactions, but also one that is built on trust and confidence expressed in the support that the represented give to the representative and to which he responds by symbolic, significant gestures, in order to, in turn, generate and maintain continuing support.

The notion of symbolic responsiveness has been alluded to by Wahlke (1971) in examining the role of the constituency in the representational relationship. He found little evidence for presuming that a district makes specific policy demands on its representative. Rather, he suggested the relevance of Easton's concept of diffuse support (1965, pp. 247-340) as a key component in the relationship between the represented and their representative. He states that the "symbolic satisfaction with the process of government is probably more important than specific, instrumental satisfaction with the policy output of the process" (Wahlke, 1971, p. 288). The important question then becomes, ". . . how do representative bodies contribute to the generation and maintenance of support?" (p. 290).

In an era of cynicism about the functioning of representative institutions, the ways in which representatives manipulate political symbols in order to generate and maintain trust or support become critical aspects of responsiveness. Edelman (1964, 1971), following the earlier work of Merriam, Lasswell, and Smith (1950), has emphasized the importance of symbolic action in politics. The need for giving symbolic reassurance is being demonstrated by the "reach out" efforts of the new President of the United States—walking down Pennsylvania Avenue after his inauguration, fire-side chats, telephonic call-a-thons, visits to economically stricken areas, being "Jimmy" Carter, and so on. The purpose of all of these symbolic

acts is to project an image that the President is truly the people's representative and ready to be responsive to them. By mobilizing trust and confidence it is presumably easier to go about the job of representation than would otherwise be the case.

Fenno (1975), in a paper on "Congressmen in their Constituencies," emphasizes the importance of political support in the representational relationship. The representative's "home style"—how he behaves *in* his constituency—is designed not just to secure constituent support and re-election but also to give the representative more freedom in his legislative activities when he is away from home. Symbolic politics has the purpose of building up credit to be drawn on in future contingencies. Although Fenno does not cite Wahlke at all, it is significant that his analysis approximates the "support-input model":

. . . congressmen seek and voters may give support on a non-policy basis. They may support a "good man" on the basis of his presentation "as a person" and trust him to be a good representative. So, we might consider the possibility that constituent trust, together with electoral accountability, may also provide a measure of good representation. The point is not that policy preferences are not a crucial basis for the representational relationship. They are. The point is that we should not start our studies of representation by assuming that they are the only basis for a representational relationship. They are not (p. 51).

Fenno's comments are all the more germane to the argument of this paper because it is interesting to note that this most eminent of legislative scholars deflates the prevailing obsession with policy responsiveness as the *sine qua non* of representation. In fact, much of what may appear to be policy responsiveness is largely symbolic responsiveness. From session to session, legislators on all levels of government—federal, state, and local—introduce thousands of bills which have not the slightest chance of ever being passed and, more often than not, are not intended to be passed. Yet representatives introduce these bills to please some constituents and to demonstrate their own responsiveness.¹¹

Responsiveness and Focus of Representation

Once the concept of representation-as-responsiveness is decomposed, policy responsiveness appears as only one component of representation and, perhaps, as by no means the dominant link between representative and represented. There is no intrinsic reason why responsiveness in one component of representation cannot go together with unresponsiveness in another. An individual or group may disagree with the representative's position and behavior on an issue of public policy and, as a result, may be unrepresented in this sense; yet, the same individual or group may be well

represented by a person who is responsive by attending to their particular requests for some type of service. Similarly, it is possible for a representative to be responsive with regard to securing public goods for his constituency, while simultaneously being quite unresponsive with respect to issues of public policy. Finally, what matters in symbolic responsiveness is that the constituents feel represented, quite regardless of whether the representative is responsive in his policy stands or the services or public goods he provides for his constituency.

Moreover, even if attention is given only to policy responsiveness, research cannot simply neglect some of the classical questions of representational theory, such as the issue of representing the district's will as against its interest, or the issue of the focus of representation. It is easily conceivable that being responsive to a district's will—the wants of its people—may involve being unresponsive to a district's interest—the needs of its people. With regard to the focus of representation, being responsive to the electoral district may produce unresponsive behavior in the larger unit of which the district is a part and, of course, vice versa.¹²

In fact, a closer look at the question of representational focus will reveal further the potentially multidimensional character of the phenomenon of responsiveness. The representative can perceive his "constituency" in a multitude of ways,¹³ thereby making the number of foci quite large. One might organize these possible foci into three categories. The first category entails a geographic focus; the representative may perceive his constituency in terms of nation, region, state, district, or any other territorial level of society. The second category would include particular solidary or functional groupings like ethnic, religious, economic, and ideological groups, whether organized or not. Finally, the representational relationship may have as foci individual persons ranging from distinguished notables to unknown clients in need of help and to personal friends.

Representational focus, then, can differ a great deal in each of these three ways. The crucial point, however, is that the focus of representation might vary with each of the four components of responsiveness. While one might find particular foci, according to the three categories, for policy responsiveness, one might find altogether different foci in regard to any of the other components of responsiveness. Any empirical combination is possible within relevant logical constraints. Empirical research has yet to address the relationship between modes of responsiveness and foci of representation, and untangle the web of complexity created by the relationship.

Responsiveness versus Response

The generally confused and confusing use of “responsiveness,” especially when linked to notions of “concurrency,” is only symptomatic of a malaise that has come to characterize the “scientific” study of politics. The malaise is to substitute “theory construction” as a technique for substantive theory or theorizing. A younger scholar in the field, Fiorina (1974, p. 24), after reviewing the empirical research on representation of recent vintage, has come to a similar conclusion. We quote him precisely because he is not ignorant of or inimical to the new technological dispensations of our time:

Too often it seems that the increasing availability of electronic computing facilities, data banks, and canned statistical packages has encouraged a concomitant decline in the use of our own capabilities. Rather than hypothesize we factor analyze, regress, or causal model. We speak of empirical theory as if it miraculously grows out of a cumulation of empirical findings, rather than as a logical structure one must carefully construct to explain those findings.

When Fiorina identifies “data banks” as one of the villains, he presumably implies that the user of these facilities has grown increasingly remote from his subjects of observation and lost touch with the humanity he is supposed to understand. Indeed, there are today users of survey research who have never interviewed a single person in their lives. Not surprisingly, therefore, causal models are being reified as if they described reality rather than being abstractions from reality. In the case of representational responsiveness, for instance, the causal direction has been assumed to point from the represented to the representative; the latter has been assumed to be the object of stimuli to which he responds (or does not respond) in the fashion of Pavlov’s famous dog. But such a model, even if one provides for intervening attitudinal or perceptual processes, does not approximate representational relationships which are, above all, transactions not necessarily structured in the ways of the S-O-R paradigm.

To appreciate the complexity of representational relationships as transactions, it is simply erroneous to assume that responsiveness—whatever component may be involved—is somehow the dependent variable in a causal structure. “Responsiveness” and “response” are not the same thing. On the contrary, a representative whose behavior is purely *reactive*—a condition that is hard to conceive on reflection but one that the “concurrency model” postulates—is the very opposite of a politically responsive person in Pitkin’s sense. As that person has been chosen, elected, or selected from the multitude or mass to be a representative, that is, as he occupies a superior position in the relationship by virtue of his “elevation,” one should expect him not merely to be reactive but to take the initiative. Whether he does

or not is, of course, an empirical question; but the question cannot be answered by simply substituting an inappropriate model of causation for empirical observation and a viable theory of representation that would guide both observation and analysis.

As already suggested, the attractiveness of the notion of responsiveness in the most recent period has been due in part to the fusion of participatory and representational ideas about democracy. But in the participatory theory of democracy the leader—insofar as the model admits of leadership at all—is largely a reactive agent guided by the collective wisdom of the group. He is at best the executor of the group's will, indeed a human facsimile of Pavlov's dog. He reacts, presumably, but he is not responsive. One is in fact back to the "instructed-delegate" model in which there is no room for discretion in the conduct of the representative. A causal model of representation that draws its arrows only in recursive fashion from the represented to the representative cannot capture, therefore, the meaning of responsiveness in Pitkin's sense. It excludes *ab initio* what is yet to be concluded.

It is a grievous error, against which Fiorina warned, to assume and to act as if the assumption were valid, that "causal analysis" will automatically yield "theory," or that by simple inversion of causal assumptions something meaningful will come out of a causal analysis. Theorizing involves something more than arbitrarily inverting the causal directions on the assumption that the resultant statistical structure will somehow reflect reality. It involves *giving reasons* and *justifying* the assumptions one brings into the causal analysis. It involves "going out on a limb," as it were, and saying something substantive about the phenomena being investigated, rather than hiding behind the artifactual "findings" of a causal analysis that may be inappropriate in the first place.

A next step in the study of representation as responsiveness must take off from the compositional nature of the phenomenon. This step cannot be limited to simplistic measures like congruence or concurrence in connection with one component of a complex set of transactional relationships. Any inferences one may make about the functions of any one component of responsiveness in "representative government" must be related to inferences one may make about the functions of other components. Otherwise the puzzle of representation—having representative government but not knowing what it is about—will continue to bewilder the political imagination.

NOTES

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association, March 31-April 2, 1977.

1. Miller and Stokes (1963). A revised version is included in Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1966, pp. 351-372). We shall be citing the original article because we are only interested here in the theoretical aspects of the analysis which remained unaffected by the revision. The particular analysis was part of a much larger study of representation conducted in connection with the 1958 congressional elections.

2. In footnote 2 of their original article Miller and Stokes refer to Eulau, Wahlke, Buchanan, and Ferguson (1959); Hanna F. Pitkin's then unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (1961), which presumably led to her later *The Concept of Representation* (1967); de Grazia (1951); and Fairlie (1940).

3. The two most significant studies of the fifties in this genre were: Turner (1951) and MacRae (1958).

4. The operational definition was expressed as follows: "In each policy domain, crossing the rankings of Congressmen and their constituencies gives an empirical measure of the extent of policy agreement between legislator and district." The measure itself was expressed as follows: "To summarize the degree of congruence between legislators and voters, a measure of correlation is introduced" (Miller and Stokes, 1963, p. 49 and ft. 10).

5. See, e.g., Stone (1976, p. 8), where one finds the bland statement: "Representation is conceived as congruence or agreement between the behavior of the legislator and the opinion of the constituency on comparable policy dimensions." Compare this also with Clausen (1973, p. 128): "Given the principal orientation of this book, the policy orientation, representation is further defined as the congruence of the policy requirements of the constituency with the policy decisions of the representative."

6. Instead, to illustrate the constituency's sanctioning power through elections, Miller and Stokes relied on data for a single Congressional district in a case which is both inappropriate and deviant, involving the defeat of Congressman Brook Hays in the Fifth Arkansas District where all voters in the sample (N=13) had read or heard "something" about Hays and his write-in opponent. But, as Miller and Stokes admit, the case was inappropriate: the voters probably knew little about Hays' legislative record in the previous Congress but punished him for his non-legislative role in the Little Rock school crisis. The Hays case indicated the power of an aroused electorate in an unusual situation; but even if they knew the legislative records of their representatives, electorates are rarely so aroused over any one of the many legislative issues with which representatives deal.

7. Wahlke (1971). The core ideas of this article were first presented by Wahlke in a 1967 paper before the Seventh World Congress of the International Political Science Association in Brussels, Belgium.

8. We could cite here, of course, as extensive "institutional" literature which has come to be neglected by "behavioral" students of representation. For a particularly useful recent introduction that paints a broad canvas, see Birch (1971).

9. The problem with causal analyses of phenomena like influence or responsiveness is that the direction of the relationships to which they presumably refer cannot be inferred from the causal structure of the statistical model that may be applied. The statistical model assumes the existence of a conceptual isomorphism between its ordering of the variables and their real-world ordering. The existence of a *possible* isomorphism between the direction of a political relationship and a causal relation between two variables in a statistical model was brought to the attention of political scientists in a series of papers by Herbert A. Simon. Attempting to define political power, Simon found that "the difficulty appeared to reside in a very specific technical

point; influence, power, and authority are all intended as asymmetrical relations." It seemed to him that "the mathematical counterpart of this asymmetrical relation appeared to be the distinction between independent and dependent variables—the independent variable determines the dependent, and not the converse." But, he pointed out in a significant passage that causal analysts seem at times to overlook, "in algebra, the distinction between independent and dependent variable is purely conventional—we can always rewrite our equations without altering their content in such a way as to reverse their roles." The problem, then, is one of giving operational meaning to the asymmetry that is implied in the definition of influence or power: "That is to say, for the assertion, 'A has power over B,' we can substitute the assertion, 'A's behavior causes B's behavior.' If we can define the causal relation, we can define influence, power, or authority, and *vice versa*." See Simon (1957, p. 5). The most significant term in Simon's explication of the causal relation is "vice versa." It suggests that the definition of the "causal relation" and the definition of the phenomenon to be causally treated (here influence) are interdependent events. In other words: "If we can define influence, we can define the causal relation."

10. Unfortunately Fiorina then characterizes the new-style Congressman as an "ombudsman." This attribution is inappropriate because an ombudsman, though presumably available for the settlement of grievances, is not the kind of "hustler" whom Fiorina sees as coming on the stage of representation. Of course, both roles seem to be involved—that of ombudsman and that of hustler.

11. For example, Froman (1967, p. 36) found that in the 88th Congress (1963-1964) 15,299 bills and resolutions were introduced in the House of Representatives, whereas only 1,742, or a little over 11 percent, were reported by committee.

12. For the distinction between "style" and "focus" of representation, see Eulau, Wahlke, Buchanan, and Ferguson (1959).

13. Fenno (1975) has also seen the need to decompose the concept of constituency. He suggests that congressmen perceive several distinct types of constituencies to which they respond in different ways.

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